

**Premier and Minister for the Arts
The Honourable Anna Bligh**

Thursday, August 19, 2010

Sandy the Tunnel Boring Machine Begins Tunnelling

'Sandy' the second Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) on the Airport Link project will commence tunnelling from the Kalinga Park worksite within 24 hours Premier Anna Bligh announced today.

That means Australia's two largest Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs) will be hard at work with Sandy's sister Rocksy tunnelling more than 70 metres and installing 32 completed rings to construct the tunnel lining since her launch a month ago.

Premier Anna Bligh said at the half-way point of the project's construction program and spend, it was great to see so many milestones being reached across the project.

"To date, over 10 million hours have been worked and the projects have surpassed their expected peak employment by an additional 800 workers bringing the jobs total to 3,400," she said.

"Across the project more than 5 kilometres of Airport Link tunnelling is now complete and within the next 24 hours Sandy will begin her 2.5km journey from Kalinga Park to Lutwyche, excavating the westbound mainline Airport Link tunnel.

"The scale of this project is incredible. The TBMs alone are the largest of their type ever to operate in Australia and they are working on the largest road tunnel project in our history. I wish the tunnellers a very safe journey to Lutwyche," she said.

Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Stirling Hinchliffe said Rocksy and Sandy will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week over the next twelve months.

"Spoil from the machines will be transported to a handling facility at Nudgee Road by a 1.8 kilometre conveyor system which will remove up to 80,000 spoil truck movements from local streets," he said.

"Extensive monitoring of the ground conditions, vibration and noise will be carried out during excavation to try to limit the disruption caused by this vitally important project as much as possible.

"Residents will receive direct notification two weeks prior to the TBMs approaching their property and the projects community relations team will also be conducting regular information as tunnelling progresses."

Thiess John Holland Project Director Gordon Ralph said Rocksy still has a way to go before the rear of the machine is attached.

"Because the machines are 195 metres long they have to be launched in two stages. Once Rocksy and Sandy have excavated 130 metres they will stop for six weeks so the rear of the machine can be assembled.

"Once final assembly is complete, Rocksy and Sandy will begin work again, excavating the tunnel and progressively installing concrete segments to form the tunnel lining moving forward up to 85 metres per week."

CEO of BrisConnections Dr Ray Wilson congratulated the Toombul team on the launch of the second TBM.

"Today's launch brings our team one step closer to the operation of Airport Link in June 2012. With the project now more than 50% complete, construction is progressing well on all workfronts.." Dr Wilson said.

By mid-2012, Airport Link, in conjunction with the Airport Roundabout Upgrade, will remove up to 18 sets of traffic lights for motorists travelling from the city to Brisbane Airport and Australia Trade Coast, reducing travel time by up to 50%.

The Airport Link project is being constructed together with the Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron), and the Airport Roundabout Upgrade Project. The combined Airport Link projects are the largest road infrastructure projects currently under construction in Australia.

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